

has repeatedly said he seeks dialogues with China and put aside the disputes, in order to win peace and prosperity over the Taiwan Straits.

Taiwan is blessed. May blessings continue to favor Taiwan and its good people.

RECOGNIZING NASTIA LIUKIN 2008 OLYMPIC GYMNAST

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor Miss Nastia Liukin of Parker, Texas, in the Fourth Congressional District of Texas, as the most decorated U.S. gymnast from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Anastasia "Nastia" Liukin was born to Anna and Valeri Liukin on October 30, 1989 in Moscow, Russia. When she was two and a half years old, her parents decided to move from Russia to the USA. As the daughter of two gymnasts, it was only natural that Nastia found herself in the gym early on. Since the age of six, she has been coached by her father at the World Olympic Gymnastics Academy, her family's gymnastics club in Plano, Texas. Through hard work, diligence and dedication to the sport, Nastia has become a Senior International Elite Gymnast, is a four time World Champion, nine time World medalist, four time U.S. National Champion and has won multiple Pacific Rim and American Cup titles. In 2005 she was also named the Gymnast of the Year by the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame and was a nominee in both the World Top 10 Athletes Award and the U.S. Sport's Academy Athlete of the Year Award.

As a star member of the 2008 Olympic Team, Nastia became the 2008 Olympic All-Around Gold Medalist and received silver medals for her performances on the balance beam, uneven bars and in the overall team competition, as well as a bronze medal in floor exercise. With nine World Championship medals and five Olympic medals, Nastia joins the ranks of Mary Lou Retton and Shannon Miller as being the American gymnast having won the most World Championship medals, as well as the most medals in a single Olympic Games.

Nastia has not limited her successes to only the gym. In January of 2008, she was accepted to Southern Methodist University in Dallas in hopes of pursuing a career in international business or acting. However, after trying to juggle her training and academic commitments, Nastia decided to put college on hold until after the Beijing Summer Olympic Games.

Madam Speaker, Americans take pride in Nastia's athletic accomplishments and her commitment to academic enrichment. I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring this young golden girl, Miss Nastia Liukin.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE BRIDGES AT DEVIL'S SLIDE

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, this week marks a milestone in a half century long journey to provide safe and scenic passage along the beautiful San Mateo County coastline and honors the tireless dedication of my predecessor in Congress, Representative Tom Lantos.

On Friday, September 26, 2008, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), along with project contractors, citizens and elected officials, will officially unveil two newly-constructed bridges at Devil's Slide on State Route One.

These bridges are part of a larger project which will connect them to twin four thousand, two hundred foot tunnels. Together, the bridges and tunnels will bypass a historically-dangerous stretch of Route One that over the past twenty-five years has seen three closures and reconstructions due to erosion of the cliff upon which the road sits.

The existing roadway between the cities of Pacifica and Half Moon Bay was first opened in 1935. By 1958, local citizens were clamoring for a safer road, but environmental, financial, geological and land-use issues complicated the process until 1996, when San Mateo County voters passed Measure T by 76 percent, authorizing the bridge and tunnel construction. The project, though, would have been impossible were it not for the passionate work here in the House of Representatives by the late Congressman Lantos, who was present last year as crews broke ground for the tunnels' construction.

In honor of his invaluable efforts, the California State Legislature passed a resolution in July 2008 to name the tunnels the "Tom Lantos Tunnels at Devil's Slide."

Since breaking ground, significant progress has been made on this ambitious and environmentally sensitive project. Along with the completion of the two bridges, crews have excavated a combined two thousand six hundred feet in the northbound and southbound bores of the tunnels. With specialized equipment, leading edge technology and carefully designed and engineered plans, crews work twenty-four hours a day on the tunnels which will eventually connect with the newly-constructed bridges. The resulting road of just over a mile will realign Route One into a safer, more reliable passage around Devil's Slide.

Madam Speaker, Tom Lantos' legacy in this chamber is well-known. With the opening of this important north-south roadway along one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline in this or any country, his work will be memorialized for residents of our district and passing motorists for generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR STEPHEN D. BLAKE

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake who became the second command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Sustainment Command on June 19th, 2008 at ASC headquarters at Rock Island IL. CSM Blake serves as primary advisor to the ASC Commanding General on all matters pertaining to enlisted personnel assigned to the Command, particularly in areas related to their training and development and to the quality of life and well-being of soldiers and their families. He also responds to the concerns of civilian and contractor employees of the Command.

During his career of 26 years of distinguished service in the United States Army Command Sergeant Major Blake has served in a number of key enlisted leadership positions. He has had tours of duty in Germany and Korea as well as combat tours in Southwest Asia during both Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and a tour in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2003, Blake graduated from class 53 of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. His military training included the Air Assault School, Primary Leadership Development Course, and First Sergeants Course. He was named the distinguished graduate from his class in both the Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Courses. He also holds an Associates Degree in Business Management from Excelsior College.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake developed SOP, using the Center for Army Lessons Learned Web site to gather the most recent tactics, techniques, and procedures used by units operating in Iraq. The SOP difficulty and intensity of the training was a confidence builder for Operation Iraqi Freedom for veterans and new soldiers alike.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star (three awards); the Legion of Merit; the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; the Meritorious Service Medal (five awards); the Army Commendation Medal (nine awards); the Army Achievement Medal (nine awards); the Good Conduct Medal (eight awards); the National Defense Service Medal with Star; the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three stars; the Iraq, Afghanistan, Global War on Terrorism and Korean Defense service Medals; the NCO Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral Four; the Army Service Ribbon; the Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral Three; the NATO Medal; Kuwait Liberation Medals from the governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; the Air Assault Badge; and three Meritorious Unit Commendations. He is also a recipient of the Ordnance Order of Samuel Sharpe.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake is a native of Tyler Mountain, WV. Blake and his wife, Karen Marie Riley of Ohio, are the parents of two children, Amber and Joshua.

Madam Speaker, it is because of soldiers like Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake that we will achieve victory in Iraq. With dedication and determination of our armed forces is what will protect our great nation. Madame Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake as a true American. I am proud to call Stephen a fellow mountaineer.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, due to illness, I unfortunately was unable to be present and to vote on the legislation considered by the House on September 15, 16, and 17, 2008.

On rollcall numbers 589, 590, 591, 600, and 601, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall numbers 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, and 597, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall number 599, had I been present, I would have voted "no." Though the Comprehensive American Energy Security and Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 6899) included some good provisions, many of which I had supported in the past, the bill also included many provisions that concerned me. I was very troubled by the legislative process. The drafting and introduction of this legislation included no Republican Members, and the bill was offered under a closed rule, prohibiting any Republican amendments for consideration.

On rollcall number 598, had I been present, I would have voted "yes." A bipartisan compromise was presented in the form of the Republican Motion to Recommit.

I regret that I did not have the opportunity to vote on these important measures.

GREAT LAKES—ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN WATER RE- SOURCES COMPACT

SPEECH OF

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S.J. Res. 45, the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of the House companion, H.R. 6577.

Almost 40 million people now get their daily drinking water from the Great Lakes. It is the largest body of surface freshwater in North America and contains 20 percent of the world's freshwater supply. It is the economic engine that drives the Midwest. And just as important, the Lakes are a national treasure.

Today we are taking historic action to protect this national treasure by passing the Great Lakes Compact. In 1998, a Canadian company proposed to take water from the Lakes by tanker to Asia, but the Council of Great Lakes Governors (CGLG) banded to-

gether and partnered with their Canadian counterparts to find a way to protect our Great Lakes water. The result of that cooperation was the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact that we are passing today.

The Great Lakes are a closed system, and less than 1 percent of Great Lakes water is returned annually through snowmelt, rain and groundwater recharge. We need to protect this resource by not only keeping pollutants out, but also by keeping Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes basin.

All eight Great Lakes states have approved the Compact, and I am proud that my home state of Illinois acted quickly, passing it in August of 2007 as the second state to ratify the Compact. Additionally, Ontario and Quebec have passed companion legislation approving the Compact.

The Compact prohibits diversions of Great Lakes water outside of the basin without the permission of the other Great Lakes states, creates regional goals and objectives for water conservation and efficiency, and includes other protections for one of our greatest national resources.

As a father and a member of Congress, ensuring that the Lakes are around for future generations is of the utmost importance to me, which is why I am proud to support the Great Lakes Compact.

HONORING WILLIAM GATES, SR.

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, almost 2.5 billion people live on less than \$2 per day. Malaria kills over 1 million children every year. Nearly 40 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS and almost 2.8 million people die from it annually. Madam Speaker, the great State of Washington is blessed to be home to many of the top minds in the world tackling these heart-sinking problems. And while it is easy to feel small and insignificant in the face of the enormity of these challenges, William Gates, Sr. has never been a wallflower.

While he is perhaps most well-known for being the father of the founder of the Microsoft Corporation, he is truly a powerhouse unto himself and a beacon of what a life driven with purpose and compassion can achieve. Mr. Gates currently serves as the chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, but as the people of our great state know, that is an encore on top of a prominent legal career and record of community leadership that spans from school levy campaigns to the United Way to a place on the University of Washington Board of Regents.

In his role as chair at the largest philanthropic organization in world history, Mr. Gates has applied the same devotion that he has carried with him throughout his life to improving the lives of those less fortunate. Through his work we are seeing amazing results in our schools, our libraries, and our villages.

Mr. Gates believes that every life is valuable, that every person deserves the opportunity to learn, and that the power of knowledge can change our lives. He continues to challenge us to redefine how we think of our

neighbor and to extend the same compassion to our global friends as we would the elderly widow down the street. His work exemplifies the good we can achieve when that compassion is coalesced with the energy, determination, and resources to concentrate on targeted results-driven projects that are held accountable to achieving their goals.

We are fortunate in our State to have such an extraordinary example for the young and the old among us of what we might achieve when we answer the call to civic action. For his lifelong commitment to improving our communities, for his never failing to embrace the have-nots, and for his visionary leadership on global health and education, William Gates, Sr. deserves the highest accolades.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER JERRY MIRANDA, USN

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, let me take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding military service and contributions to our country of Commander Gerald Nereus Miranda, Jr., U.S. Navy—known to us all as Jerry—on the occasion of the completion of his assignment as Deputy Director of the Navy Congressional Liaison Office for the U.S. House of Representatives.

A native of San Diego, California, Commander Miranda is a 1990 graduate of the University of California at San Diego. He received his commission at the Navy's Officer Candidate School at Newport, Rhode Island that November. After completing his initial submarine training, he earned his submarine "gold dolphins" in 1993. He served aboard USS *Portsmouth* (SSN 707), USS *Florida* (SSBN 728), and as Executive Officer aboard USS *Key West* (SSN 722). He also served with Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and was a key member of a Joint Special Operations Task Force battle staff while stationed in Iraq, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Following his Executive Officer tour, Commander Miranda was selected to serve as Deputy Director, Navy House Liaison in February 2006. In this highly visible tour, he assisted in the passage of vital Navy budget legislation during the 109th and 110th Congresses. Additionally, he planned, executed, and led 42 congressional and staff delegations across the globe that included meetings with various world leaders in support of America's national security policy.

Over the past two years, Commander Miranda has been a fixture in my office. His expansive knowledge of the Navy's policies and priorities, especially his experience in the submarine force, has helped me advocate for the needs of my constituents and my district. Whether it was answering questions from my staff about submarine policy, coordinating congressional delegation trips to Groton or simply taking the time to stop by the office to check in, Commander Miranda has always been a ready and accessible resource. His professionalism, resourcefulness and dedication to the Navy and our Nation has proved invaluable to me and my colleagues, and he has